



Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

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ITEM 6 (a):* COORDINATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

1992 REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION
(ACC) TO THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL

Addendum

ARRANGEMENTS FOR SYSTEM-WIDE COOPERATION AND
COORDINATION IN THE FIELD OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report contains proposals by the Executive Director for new arrangements for coordination and cooperation in the field of the environment in response to the new inter-agency arrangements evolving in the United Nations system as a result of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the streamlining of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) subsidiary structure initiated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The outline responds to the continuing coordinating requirements in the field of the environment as stipulated in General Assembly resolutions 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and 32/197 of 20 December 1977.

* Refers to the number of the item on the Provisional Agenda
(UNEP/GC.17/1).

Suggested Action by the Governing Council

The Governing Council may wish to,

Take note of the outline proposed by the Executive Director for new arrangements for coordination in the field of the environment;

Endorse the course of action outlined in order to enable the Executive Director to discharge effectively the coordinating role required of UNEP by various legislative authorities.

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR SYSTEM-WIDE COOPERATION AND
COORDINATION IN THE FIELD OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

1. The outcome of UNCED and the adopted Agenda 21 have necessitated a system-wide reappraisal of established structures for inter-agency cooperation and coordination. To that end an ACC Task Force was established at the first regular session of the ACC for 1992. The Task Force comprised the Executive Heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Chairman), the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) UNEP and the World Bank, with the UNCED Secretariat participating on an *ex officio* basis.
2. The report of the ACC Task Force was presented to the ACC at its second regular session for 1992, at which the ACC endorsed the report. In considering issues related to arrangements for cooperation and coordination through the ACC and its subsidiary machinery, the Task Force, in its report, endorsed the role of the ACC as the "high-level inter-agency coordination mechanism" called for in Agenda 21 (paragraph 38.17).
3. At the intermediate level, the ACC established an Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), with the broad responsibility to identify major policy issues relating to the follow-up of UNCED by the United Nations system and advise the ACC on ways and means of addressing them so as to ensure effective cooperation and coordination of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21. A core membership of the IACSD was designated to include the members of the ACC Task Force as well as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IACSD is to be serviced by the newly established Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, and chaired by the head of the Department.

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4. In making its recommendations for inter-agency coordination in the follow-up to UNCED, the Task Force took note of the experience of the Designated Officials for Environmental Matters (DOEM) and the Committee of International Development Institutions on the Environment (CIDIE), recalled the responsibility entrusted to the ACC for system-wide coordination in the field of the environment and recognized that there were a certain number of well-defined environmental issues in which UNEP could play a leadership role, as clearly indicated in Agenda 21 (paragraphs 38.21 and 22).

5. In light of the foregoing, the Task Force considered that the time had come for UNEP and other organizations involved to reassess the DOEM's functional linkages with the ACC and its subsidiary machinery. The report of the Task Force goes on to state: "To this effect the Task Force recommends that the ACC invite the Executive Director of UNEP to submit specific proposals on system-wide cooperation and coordination in the field of environment, after seeking the advice of the DOEM. Such a proposal should aim at enabling the ACC to discharge more effectively its responsibility for coordination in the field of environment, as stipulated in GA resolution 2997 (XXVII) and 32/197".

6. Having re-examined the role of the existing coordinating structure in the field of the environment particularly in the light of Agenda 21 and the report of the ACC Task Force, the Executive Director is making the following proposals:

(a) Given the continuing need for inter-agency coordination in the field of the environment and the renewed and enhanced mandate provided to UNEP by Agenda 21, the Executive Director proposes that the ACC should remain the central body responsible for coordination in the field of the environment as envisaged in General Assembly resolutions 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and 32/197 of 20 December 1977;

(b) The Executive Director is in the process of developing more detailed and specific system-wide arrangements to assist the ACC in the discharge of its coordinating function. In this connection, the Executive Director plans to inform the ACC, at its April 1993 session, of the establishment of an Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group (IAEG), together with an appropriate substructure, as a possible successor arrangement to the current DOEM. The IAEG would become the principal system-wide forum for inter-agency cooperation and coordination in the field of the environment under the ACC. The IAEG would consider environmental policy issues under the guidance of and within the policy framework of the ACC and take actions, as appropriate. The IAEG would meet under the chairmanship of the Executive Director of UNEP and membership would comprise senior officials of member and participant institutions of the ACC;

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(c) The IAEG would be supported at the working level by a system of focal points who would meet on a thematic basis or to consider a cluster of subjects in order to undertake thematic joint planning and programming. This would be a flexible arrangement, involving agencies/organizations with a major contribution to make and would have provision for lead agencies to take responsibility on a thematic basis;

(d) In discharging its responsibilities as the central body responsible for coordination in the field of the environment, it is proposed that the ACC continue to report to the Governing Council according to the guidelines which the Council has been requested to provide (UNEP GC.17/12/Add.2). The ACC would be assisted in the preparation of its reports by the IAEG.



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ITEM 6 (a)*: COORDINATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

1992 REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION
(ACC) TO THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL

Addendum

POLICY ADVICE OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF UNEP
TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION
(ACC) ON FUTURE REPORTS OF THE ACC

Note by the Executive Director

1. This note is presented to the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) by the Executive Director in response to a request by the Designated Officials on Environmental Matters (DOEM) of the United Nations system, contained in paragraph 4 of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) report to the UNEP Governing Council for 1992 (UNEP/GC.17/12). The Governing Council is requested to reassess the focus of future reporting concerning the environment in the light of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), to identify the scope and objectives of the ACC reports to the Council in order to assist the ACC in rationalizing its preparatory process and to ensure that the reports meet with the specific priority requirements of the Governing Council.
2. In the above context, the Council may wish to bear in mind that UNCED reaffirmed the Council's role as the principal body within the United Nations in the field of the environment and stated further that the Council should continue to play its role with regard to policy guidance and coordination in the field of the environment, taking into account the development perspective.
3. In addition, Agenda 21 calls for a strengthened role for UNEP and its Governing Council. It will be recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, gave the Council the mandate to promote international cooperation in the field of the environment and to recommend, as appropriate, policies to this end.

* Refers to the number of the item on the Provisional Agenda
(UNEP/GC.17/1).



4. The Council should also bear in mind the valuable cooperation that it has received from the ACC, since the latter was assigned the functions of the previously existing Environmental Coordination Board by the General Assembly by its resolution 32/197 (Annex) of 20 December 1977.

Suggested action by the Governing Council

The Governing Council may wish to:

- Emphasize that the Administrative Committee on Coordination, as the central coordinating body for sustainable development and environment in the United Nations system, can play a significant role in assisting the Governing Council to address system-wide cooperation and coordination for the environment, taking into account the development perspective;
- Request the Administrative Committee on Coordination in future to report only in those years when the Governing Council meets in regular session;
- Further request the Administrative Committee on Coordination to focus future reports to the Governing Council on policy matters, taking into account policy issues being addressed in other intergovernmental forums of relevance to the Governing Council, and to address those policy issues that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development identified for the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular those regarding system-wide coordination and emerging and important environmental issues of system-wide interest;
- Request the Administrative Committee on Coordination to assist in harmonizing the Governing Council's decision-making process with that of other intergovernmental fora, *inter alia*, through the regular reports of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to the Governing Council.
